

**Community Involvement Plan – Columbia Falls Aluminum Company Site**  
**EPA Region 8**  
**September 2016**

(review draft – not for circulation)

Cover Page – graphics and layout TBD

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) promotes fair and meaningful public involvement so that all people enjoy equal access to the decision making process and the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards regardless of race, color, national origin, or income level.

EPA's community involvement activities at the Anaconda Aluminum Co Columbia Falls Reduction Plant site, also known as the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC) site , are designed to:

- Inform and update the public about the site and the cleanup process.
- Engage the public to provide meaningful input into the Superfund process and site cleanup decisions.
- Sustain public engagement across the Superfund timeline.

This community involvement plan (CIP) summarizes community concerns about the CFAC site outlines how people can engage throughout the Superfund process.

This Community Involvement Plan (CIP):

- Summarizes community concerns and communication preferences about the CFAC site (Section 1)
- Presents EPA's community involvement program for the Site (Section 2).
- Reviews the Site's history and status (Section 3)
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- Summarizes key community information (Section 4).
- Shares additional information about the Superfund process (Section 5).
- Provides a listing of available resources (Appendices).

## Introduction

Superfund Steps	Description	CFAC timeline
Preliminary Assessment/ Site Investigation	The Preliminary Assessment involves gathering historical and other available information about site conditions to evaluate whether the site poses a threat to human health and the environment and/or whether further investigation is needed.	1984 - 2014
Superfund Listing Process	Information about a site that is collected in the Preliminary Assessment/Site Investigation phase helps EPA to evaluate the risks posed by the site and determine if the site qualifies for cleanup under the Superfund program. Public comments are considered when a site is proposed for Superfund status.	2016 – Final Listing 2015 –Proposed Listing
Remedial Investigation (RI)	The Remedial Investigation determines the nature and extent of contamination at the site, tests whether certain technologies are capable of treating the contamination, and evaluates the cost and performance of technologies that could be used to clean up the site	2016 - 2020
Feasibility Study (FS)	If the RI shows contamination on site and potential risks to human health and the environment, a feasibility study may be conducted that identifies and evaluates options for addressing those risks.	2021 (estimated)
Proposed Plan	The proposed plan summarizes the findings of the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study and identifies alternatives and a preferred approach to addressing site risks. Public comments are considered on the proposed plan	
Record of Decision (ROD)	The Record of Decision documents and describes the lead agency's final remedy selection after considering all public comments.	
Remedial Design	After a ROD is issued, the EPA works with the State and Potential Responsible Parties (PRPs) to design technical specifications for the cleanup.	
Remedial Action	Remedial Action follows the remedial design phase and involves the actual construction or implementation of the cleanup.	
Construction Completion	This is the point in the Superfund Process when any necessary physical construction activities needed to comply with the cleanup actions at the site has been completed.	
Post-Construction Completion	When all cleanup phases have been completed and all cleanup goals have been achieved and the remedy is determined to be protective the site may be deleted from the NPL. Reviews may be conducted every 5 years at the site to determine if the site cleanup remains protective of human health and the environment.	

The CFAC site is located at 2000 Aluminum Drive, two miles northeast of Columbia Falls in Flathead County, Montana. It covers approximately 960 acres north of the Flathead River and operated between 1955 and 2009. The CFAC site is located with EPA Region 8 that includes Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, and the Dakotas.

During operation, CFAC created significant quantities of spent potliner material, a federally listed hazardous waste, as a byproduct of the aluminum smelting process. EPA's initial site evaluation indicated ground water and surface water had been contaminated with cyanide, fluoride, and various metals. Multiple potential sources of contamination are located at the site that may pose risks to human health or the environment.

To protect human health and the environment, EPA added the CFAC site to the National

Community involvement is essential throughout the Superfund process to ensure people can share information about the site and participate in the decision making process – from initial investigation to final cleanup and reuse of the site. Community involvement activities have been ongoing and will continue at the CFAC site in order to identify and respond to community concerns, engage people in the Superfund process, and develop the community involvement plan. These activities at the CFAC have included:

- Researching community documents and considering feedback received during public comment periods,
- Meeting with local residents and community groups,
- Working with elected officials and government partners at the local, state, and national level,
- Cooperating with local news media, and
- Conducting community interviews.

Community interviews are an important part of EPA’s public engagement program. EPA will continue to conduct community interviews as an ongoing method to identify community concerns about the CFAC site and how to effectively engage community in the Superfund process.

In June 2016, EPA conducted an initial round of community interviews with local Columbia Falls residents, adjacent land owners, former CFAC workers, local business owners, elected officials, and other stakeholder representatives. The information gathered during these interviews, and other outreach methods, have been considered in identifying community concerns about the site and preparing this community involvement plan.

#### Section 1: Community Concerns and Communication Preferences

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### **Section 3: Site Background and History**

#### *Site Description*

site context map here

A primary aluminum reduction facility was active on site from 1955 to 2009. The facility’s permanent closure was announced in March 2015. The Site covers about 960 acres, and is bounded by Cedar Creek Reservoir to the north, Teakettle Mountain to the east, Flathead River to the south and Cedar Creek to the west. The Flathead River is a fishery that includes the federally designated threatened bull trout and the federally sensitive westslope cutthroat trout. The Site’s total property area covers about 3,196 acres. The remainder of the site property is

located south of Flathead River. It was never used for industrial operations.

site location and features map here

Historic buildings and industrial facilities on site included offices, warehouses, laboratories, mechanical shops, paste plant, coal tar pitch tanks, pump houses, a casting garage and a potline facility. The Site also includes seven closed landfills, an active landfill, material loading and unloading areas, two closed leachate ponds, and several wastewater percolation ponds. A rectifier yard and switchyard owned by Bonneville Power Administration and a right-of-way for the Burlington Northern Railroad are also within the Site's boundaries.

The Site is located in a rural setting. The nearest residences are located adjacent to the Site's southwest boundary, about 0.80 miles west of the historic footprint of site operations, in a neighborhood referred to as Aluminum City. The City of Columbia Falls anticipates that land uses in this area will not change rapidly in the foreseeable future.

### *Site History*

Prior to the Site's industrial development in the 1950s, land uses in the area were residential and agricultural. Anaconda Copper Mining Company purchased the property in 1951 and built the aluminum reduction facility. In 1985, CFAC bought the plant from Atlantic Richfield Company, which had acquired the facility from the plant's original owner in 1977. Glencore, a Switzerland-based company, acquired CFAC in 1999 and announced the facility's permanent closure in 2015.

Facility operations generated significant quantities of spent potliner material, a federally listed hazardous waste, as a byproduct of the aluminum smelting process. Contaminants detected at the Site include cyanide, fluoride and metals, including arsenic, chromium, lead and selenium. These contaminants are present in soils, surface ponds and groundwater at the Site and pose a risk to nearby wells and the Flathead River.

### *Current Status*

EPA and the State of Montana have determined that a comprehensive investigation of the Site is necessary to inform effective cleanup actions to address these risks. EPA proposed adding the Site to the National Priorities List (NPL) in March 2015, making it eligible for additional study and cleanup resources under the Superfund program.

EPA finalized the Site's listing on the National Priorities List on September 9, 2016. EPA carefully evaluated all public comments received on the proposal to list the site to the NPL before making a final decision.

In November 2015, EPA signed a final agreement with CFAC to investigate site contamination. Under the terms of the agreement, CFAC is conducting a comprehensive investigation of soils, river sediments, and ground and surface water to determine the nature and extent of contamination at the Site. All work is approved and overseen by EPA and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (Montana DEQ). The results of the investigation – known

as the Site's remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) – will determine cleanup needs and identify potential cleanup options at the Site.

In 2015, Calbag purchased the physical aluminum plant infrastructure from CFAC in 2015 and work has started to dismantle the structures.

### *Community Involvement*

EPA Region 8, in conjunction with Montana DEQ, has conducted community relations activities throughout site activities to date. Community outreach activities have included establishing and maintaining a public website, holding public availability sessions and public meetings, distributing community updates and fact sheets about the site, publication of public notices in the *Daily Inter Lake, Flathead Beacon*, and *Hungry Horse News* newspapers, meeting with community groups, stakeholders, and individuals, establishing and maintenance of an information repository at the Columbia Falls branch of the ImagineIF library.

The CFAC Community Liaison Panel (CLP) was organized by CFAC to provide a forum for open discussions and exchange of ideas and opinions about the CFAC site. CLP meetings are open to the public. Participants represent the community, elected officials, project consultants, state and federal agencies, and CFAC. CFAC is owned by Glencore, a Switzerland-based company. Glencore hired Ann Green Communications to select the CFAC CLP's membership and facilitate its meetings. EPA and Montana DEQ staff provide updates and serve as information resources at CFAC CLP meetings. Company representatives from CFAC and Glencore participate as well.

<http://www.cfacproject.com/community-liaison-panel/>

<http://cityofcolumbiafalls.org/cfac-liaison-panel>

## **Section 4: Community Profile**

Columbia Falls and Flathead County are part of northwest Montana's Flathead Valley, which lies between Glacier National Park and Flathead Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi. Surrounded by more than two million acres of the Flathead National Forest and with the Flathead River flowing through the community, Columbia Falls is known as the gateway to Glacier National Park.

### *Land Use and Demographics*

Flathead County encompasses 5,098 square miles. About 94 percent of the land area is national or state forest land, wilderness, farmland, or forest. Developed areas make up the remaining 6 percent of the county. In addition to Columbia Falls, other major population centers in the county include Kalispell and Whitefish.

As shown in the table below, the county and its population centers have experienced significant and sustained population growth since 2000. It is one of the fastest growing areas in Montana.

Flathead County		Columbia Falls		Kalispell		Whitefish	
Population		Population		Population		Population	
2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
74,471	90,928	3,873	4,688	15,184	19,927	5,629	6,357
Population Change (2000-2010)							
22%		21%		31%		13%	
Current Population (2015 estimates)							
96,155				22,052		7,073	
Notes: The 2000 and 2010 data are from the U.S. Census decennial surveys. The 2015 population numbers are estimates from the U.S. Census.							

The City of Columbia Falls covers 923 acres – 1.3 square miles – and is bounded by the Flathead River to the east and south and by Burlington Northern railroad tracks to the north. The original town was laid out in the 1890s, incorporated in 1909, and developed as a trade- and transportation-related settlement.<sup>1</sup> The community is located about eight miles from Whitefish and 15 miles from Kalispell. State Highway 40 and U.S. Highway 2 connect the three cities.

#### Text Box Option

### Local and Tribal Government Overview

#### Flathead County

A County Commission serves as the county's executive and legislative branch. The Commission consists of three elected at-large commissioners. In addition, Flathead County has eight elected officials representing various branches of government. Elected offices include the Sheriff, Clerk and Recorder, Treasurer, County Attorney, Clerk of Court, two Justice Court Justices of the Peace, and the Superintendent of Schools. <https://flathead.mt.gov>

#### City of Columbia Falls

The City has a commission-manager form of government. Elected officials include a Mayor and a six-member City Council. The City Manager is the day-to-day manager of city business and activities. <http://cityofcolumbiafalls.org>

#### Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

The Flathead Indian Reservation has land located in Flathead County. The Reservation is home to the Bitterroot Salish, upper Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai Tribes – also known as the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation. A total of 28,296 acres of reservation land are located in Flathead County – the entire reservation covers more than 1.2 million acres. Headquartered in Pablo, Montana, the Flathead Indian Reservation is governed by

<sup>1</sup> Source: *Columbia Falls Master Plan*, 2000. Accessed at [https://flathead.mt.gov/planning\\_zoning/documents/ColumbiaFallsCity-CountyMasterPlan.pdf](https://flathead.mt.gov/planning_zoning/documents/ColumbiaFallsCity-CountyMasterPlan.pdf).

the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribal Council, which consists of 10 elected councilmen.  
<http://tribalnations.mt.gov/cskt>

### **Blackfeet Nation**

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation is located in northwest Montana. The entire reservation spans about 1.5 million acres. The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council is the governing body of the Blackfeet Nation and is responsible for exercising all powers of government under the Blackfeet Constitution and Bylaws. The Council consists of nine members from four districts who are elected by tribal members to serve four-year terms. <http://blackfeetnation.com/>

Historically, the area's economy has been based on industry and natural resources – logging, mining, agriculture and commodities production. Over time, the local economy has diversified, experiencing significant growth in the retail trade and service industries as well as construction and health care. Current economic drivers for Columbia Falls and Flathead County include its natural resources and related recreation and tourism opportunities. <sup>2</sup>

The table below lists additional demographic information for Columbia Falls and Flathead County, with national averages provided for comparison purposes.





The findings in this *Community Involvement Plan* are based on the project interviews and review of available community documents.

Flathead County's *Growth Policy*, last updated in 2012, included extensive public outreach and assessment of county-wide goals and priorities. The findings highlight a community in transition, seeking to balance recognition, conservation and use of historical and natural resources with economic expansion and sustained population growth.<sup>3</sup>

#### Text Box Option

#### **Flathead County *Growth Policy* Goals and Priorities**

- Encourage development that respects the rural character of the county.
- Promote and respect local culture, heritage and history.
- Enhance conservation of working farms and ranches as well as clean water and key wildlife habitat.
- Identify open spaces that serve a critical role in public and environmental health, safety and general welfare.
- Create an affordable housing plan.
- Preserve and increase recreational access to public lands and waterways.
- Enhance a sustainable agricultural and timber industry.
- Foster business development as well as education and workforce development programs.
- Identify and prioritize infrastructure and transportation needs, including a bicycle path network.
- Preserve the county's natural amenities.

CFAC's April 2015 *Community Assessment Report* identified a variety of community concerns and perspectives about the site. Ann Green Communications conducted community interviews with<sup>4</sup> community leaders, elected officials, neighbors, business leaders, emergency response officials, former employees, environmental advocates and other site stakeholders to ascertain an

<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup>

understanding of the attitude and interest toward CFAC and the salvage and remediation work done at the site. Focus areas included issues of importance to the community, local perceptions of industry and CFAC, and suggestions for CFAC's community outreach approach as part of its site responsibilities.

#### *General Community Concerns*

- Need for sustainable economic development and quality jobs.
- Decline of industrial employers such as CFAC.
- Rapid population growth in the region.
- Valuing the area's environmental resources and quality of life.

#### *Community Perceptions of Industry*

- Long-time residents emphasized the importance of industry as employers and corporate citizens.
- Newer arrivals highlighted concerns about industry's environmental impacts.

#### *Community Perspectives on the Site*

- CFAC as a valued long-time employer, neighbor and community supporter.
- Community-wide disappointment and concern at facility's closure.
- Emphasis on site cleanup and protection of public health and community water supplies.
- Concern about potential Superfund site stigma.
- Concerns about site contamination's potential health and environmental impacts.
- Interest in adaptive reuse of the area and its infrastructure after cleanup.
- Importance of keeping the community up to date during each step of the cleanup process.
- Interest in establishing a community group to make sure people have a voice in the cleanup process.

### **Section 1: Community Concerns and Communication Preferences**

All interviewees were familiar with the site. Many community members shared stories about working at the facility as well living nearby, stories about friends' and family members'

experiences at the facility, and stories about the facility's role as a major employer in the community for many years. All the people interviewed shared their concerns and communication preferences about the site.

#### *Community Concerns:*

Clean up: All interviewees shared the concern that site cleanup be thorough, protective, lasting and timely. While community members expressed frustration at the multi-year duration of site investigation and sampling activities, most welcomed EPA's efforts at the Site. Many expressed concern about potential impacts and benefits of Superfund listing. Most welcomed EPA and MDEQ's involvement as well as the involvement of other state and local government agencies such as the Montana Department of Health & Public Services and the Flathead County Health Department.

Community members worry about potential effects of the cleanup on surrounding areas, including the transportation of asbestos and other hazardous materials through the community. Interviewees also shared concerns about long-term monitoring of the cleanup and the continued availability of funding for these efforts if the Site was not placed on the National Priorities List.

Community Involvement: Many interviewees discussed their concerns about community involvement in the cleanup process. Community members requested that city and county officials, the CFAC CLP, residents in the Aluminum City neighborhood near the Site, and the general community receive timely updates. Many community members expressed concern about whether their input would be considered in the decision-making process. Community members also asked for clarification on the potential impacts of the Site's listing on the Superfund program's National Priorities List, as well as the roles of various agencies and organizations, and noted the need for more education about site sampling activities and EPA's cleanup process.

In addition to a range of public health concerns, interviewees discussed air quality, well water safety, municipal water supply safety, wildlife and watershed impacts, and trespassing in areas near the Site as priority issues of concern. .

Water: Water quality and access to water were among the most important environmental issues identified by interviewees. People noted that water quality is related to both ground water, for wells and municipal water supplies in Columbia Falls, and surface water, for downstream communities. Interviewees requested more information about which contaminants have been identified in area water supplies, their concentrations, and whether those concentrations pose a risk to public health or the environment. People also asked about potential cleanup options for area water supplies, whether wells and water infrastructure systems will need to be upgraded or replaced, and whether site contamination could impair area water supplies over the long term.

Human Health: Many community members asked for educational materials about on site conditions and contaminants as well as recommendations for minimizing potential contact with site contamination and to better understand any risks associated with everyday activities (e.g., drinking well water, living near the Site). People also noted concerns about potential health impacts on fish and other wildlife, including winter habitat for elk near the Site.

Interviewees' experiences with the Site ranged from working on site for decades to living nearby to living in Columbia Falls and having minimal to no contact with the CFAC facility. Interviewees discussed concerns about potential health impacts but did not attribute any health-related issues or illnesses to the Site or facility operations. Some people noted that community concerns about site contamination are long standing, stretching back 20 to 30 years.

### Communication and Information Preferences

**Transparency:** Many interviewees shared their preferences for communication and receiving information. Most agreed EPA Region 8 should be transparent about its work and strive to include all community members. Community members want EPA to keep local government staff, agencies and elected officials updated on all site-related work. Many community members also requested that EPA Region 8 share information directly through community channels. Community members requested that small updates be provided as part of public comment periods during city council and county commission meetings, with major updates provided at separate public meetings hosted by EPA Region 8.

**Meeting in Person:** People emphasized that meeting in person and face to face works well, and recommended that EPA also present information in a variety of community locations, such as the Senior Citizens Center, the Columbia Falls Lions Club, the Rotary Club of Columbia Falls and the Kiwanis Club of Columbia Falls, the Columbia Falls Farmers' Market, the Columbia Falls Community Market, and the Columbia Falls Chamber of Commerce.

**Information Dissemination:** Most community members and local officials recommended that EPA share information primarily in written form and include many pictures and maps. They stressed that information should be straightforward and easy to understand – in plain language. Outside of in-person meetings, people recommended sharing written information with community members in a variety of ways – through regular mailings, social media updates and emailed newsletters. They also recommended using a variety of other formats – radio announcements, newspaper articles and television news stories on local stations – to make sure information reaches as many people as possible. Many also requested that information be readily available, both online and locally.

**Community Advisory Group (CAG):** A CAG is an independent group made up of members of the community and is designed to serve as the focal point for the exchange of information among the local community and EPA, the State regulatory agency, and other pertinent agencies involved in cleanup of a Superfund site. When EPA Region 8 asked about CAG formation as an option to assist with sharing information with the larger community, many interviewees expressed interest in exploring the option further. Many emphasized that having two community organizations – the CFAC CLP and a Community Advisory Group – at the same time could be confusing, waste resources and lead to information discrepancies and inconsistencies. Other people brought up concerns that the CLP wasn't inclusive of the broad community and supported forming a separate CAG. People recommended that if a CAG was formed, it should be as broadly representative of community perspectives as possible.

Future Land Use: Interviewees did not express strong preferences regarding the future use of the Site following investigations and cleanup. Several asked about the viability of reusing the Site in the future, with the goal of doing something productive with the land. Community members asked that EPA cover future land use considerations as part of site information materials and presentations.

## **Section 2: The Community Involvement Plan**

EPA's community involvement plan outlines how EPA will work with others to address community concerns with consideration of the communication methods preferred by the community. To promote fair and meaningful public involvement in the investigation, cleanup, and potential reuse of the CFAC site EPA will:

1. Promote community awareness and understanding of the Superfund process and the CFAC site by collecting and making information available and accessible to the public in a timely, non-technical manner

Encourage and publicize opportunities for community engagement and public comment throughout the Superfund process.

3. Sustain long term public engagement and maintain two-way communication with community, partners, and stakeholders to ensure people have equal access to the decision making process and the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards regardless of race, color, national origin, or income level.

### *Community Involvement Plan Tools and Activities*

To achieve these goals, the EPA has identified and developed a variety of community involvement tools and activities:

Distribution List: EPA has created a distribution list to share information about the site to all parties who would like to be kept informed about the site through email and regular mail. EPA will maintain and continue to build the mailing list. If you would like to be on EPA's distribution on the CFAC site, please contact the Community Involvement Coordinator.

Fact Sheets: address community concerns about the CFAC site, EPA will prepare brief documents written in plain language and containing user-friendly graphics to help people understand technical reports, concepts and Potential fact sheets include:

- CFAC Contaminants of Concern: Outlines the contaminants of concern at the site, what effects they have on human health, the pathways for exposures, and what the public can do to protect themselves.
- CFAC Superfund Site Overview: Provides a general description of the site, how it is

managed, and the timeline for Superfund implementation.

Fact sheets will be distributed to all parties on the site distribution list and will be available at the Information Repository and shared with other groups and organizations for broad distribution.

Information Repository:

EPA will maintain a physical place to keep a collection of information and documents related to the site. There are currently two information repositories for the site: Physical copies of documents related to the site are available for review or photocopy at two information repositories:

ImagineIt Library – Columbia Falls 130 6th Street West Columbia Falls, MT 59912 (406)892-5919	EPA Region 8 Headquarters Superfund Records Center 1595 Wynkoop Street Denver, CO 80202-1129 303-312-7273 or 800-227-8917 ext. 312-7273
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Some of the contents available include:

- Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Progress Reports (multiple documents starting Nov. 2015)
- Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent for Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (36 pp)
- Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study Work Plan (511 pp)
- Phase I Site Characterization Sampling and Analysis Plan (244 pp)
- Site Reassessment for CFAC Aluminum Smelter Facility (273 pp)
- Support Document for the Revised National Priorities List Final Rule (617 pp)

Maps and Visual Aids: EPA will use maps, photographs, and other visual aids in documents and fact sheets, at public sessions, and in online site resources to help people understand the CFAC site

Media Distribution / Media Events

*Description:* Local media enable EPA to reach the local community quickly and effectively and also to reinforce key messages and information over time.

*Goal:* To reach a diverse community audience and communicate complex site-related issues effectively to site stakeholders.

*Method:* EPA Region 8 will coordinate with the City of Columbia Falls and Flathead County and provide updates and information to local newspapers and radio and television stations and encourage them to further distribute site-related information on a regular basis.

EPA Region 8 will use the following media channels for outreach:

*Newspaper Communication*

Daily Inter Lake  
Flathead Beacon  
Hungry Horse News

*Television Communication*

KCFW and KECI – NBC Montana  
KPAX – CBS Channel 8  
KTMF – ABC Fox Montana

*Radio Communication*

KGEZ 600 AM  
KERR 750 AM  
KJJR 880 AM  
KOFI 1180 AM

KBBZ 98.5 FM  
KHNK 95.9 FM  
KDBR 106.3 FM  
KUKL 90.1 FM

EPA Website: EPA will maintain a website for the CFAC site to provide online information about the site and post documents and other resources as they emerge. EPA also has other webpages for information about the Superfund program and Region 8:

- Information about the CFAC site: <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/columbia-falls>
- Information about the national Superfund program: <http://www.epa.gov/Superfund>.
- Information about the EPA Region 8: <https://www.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-region-8-mountains-and-plains>.

**Other organizations also have websites with information about the CFAC site:**

**<http://deq.mt.gov/DEQAdmin/CFAC/cfac>**

**<http://www.cfacproject.com/community-liaison-panel/>**

**<http://cityofcolumbiafalls.org/cfac-liaison-panel>**

Community Meetings

*Description:* Many interviewees recommended that EPA host informational gatherings, especially when more time is needed for deep engagement with community members.

*Goal:* To update the community on site developments and address community questions, concerns, ideas and comments. These sessions and meetings also provide EPA with feedback from the community.

*Method:* EPA Region 8 will provide at least two weeks of notice for all scheduled meetings. EPA Region 8 will coordinate with Flathead County and the City of Columbia Falls as well as MDEQ and other agencies to schedule, prepare for and attend all announced meetings. EPA site staff will attend the meetings.

Depending on the topics to be discussed, the following formats will be considered:

- *Meetings and Open Houses* – larger community meetings that may include EPA presentations, information presented on posters, and time for the community to ask questions and give feedback.
- *Small Venue Meetings and Focus Groups* – smaller and more informal gatherings focusing on a particular topic or group interest.
- *Listening Sessions* – opportunities for community members to share their thoughts and concerns with EPA representatives.
- *Workshops and Facilitated Discussions* – facilitated meetings designed to answer specific questions or address specific community concerns.

EPA will send meeting notices for these gatherings to the email list, mailing list, community partners, newspapers, and radio and television stations as appropriate. Potential meeting locations identified include Columbia Falls City Hall, the Columbia Falls High School theater, the Columbia Falls Junior High School cafetorium, North Valley Community Center and The Coop, home of the Columbia Falls Community Market.

*Community Advisory Group Meetings:* A CAG is an independent group made up of members of the community and is designed to serve as the focal point for the exchange of information among the local community and EPA, the State regulatory agency, and other pertinent agencies involved in cleanup of a Superfund site. A CAG can be helpful in engaging the community in the Superfund process and assist EPA in making better decisions on how to clean up a site.

Although CAGs are independent from the EPA, the EPA has resources available to form and support a CAG. EPA will work with the community and coordinate with Flathead County and the City of Columbia Falls regarding potential CAG formation.

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/community-advisory-groups>.

#### Coordination with Local Governments and State Agencies



*Description:* Local governments and state agencies are important partners that coordinate with EPA to ensure the protection of human health and the environment at Superfund sites.

*Goal:* EPA's goal is to ensure that local government officials and agencies are informed of project activities that may occur in their jurisdiction and to help minimize the impacts of project activities.

*Method:* EPA Region 8 will continue to coordinate with Flathead County, the City of Columbia Falls, the Flathead County Health Department, MDEQ, the Montana Department of Health & Public Services, and other relevant parties to keep them informed, receive their feedback and understand their concerns.

#### Community Organization Interaction

*Description:* EPA will coordinate with and, upon request, attend meetings of community organizations such as the Senior Citizens Center, the Columbia Falls Lions Club, the Rotary Club of Columbia Falls and the Kiwanis Club of Columbia Falls, the Columbia Falls Chamber of Commerce, and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

*Goal:* Such interaction helps ensure that members of these organizations receive the information they need and that EPA receives their input and understands their concerns. Interaction with stakeholder groups also can extend EPA's outreach by sharing EPA public service announcements, site updates, and other information with their members and constituents.

*Method:* EPA will coordinate with Flathead County and the City of Columbia Falls to identify and communicate with any additional stakeholder groups that have identified the Site as a focus of their organization.

#### Informal Discussions

*Description:* Informal discussions with EPA staff are among the ways that the public and EPA can communicate about a project.

*Goal:* To help keep community members informed about the Site, while providing EPA Region 8 with feedback about site activities and the community's opinions.

*Method:* EPA Region 8 will continue to maintain a presence in the community through informal visits to talk with local residents. Informal comments can be offered at any time. Written comments may be submitted via email or mail to site manager Mike Cirian at [cirian.mike@epa.gov](mailto:cirian.mike@epa.gov) | 108 East 9th Street, Libby, MT 59923 or to community involvement coordinator Robert Moler at [moler.robert@epa.gov](mailto:moler.robert@epa.gov) | 10 West 15th Street, Suite 3200, Helena, MT 59626. Please see Appendix A for additional contact information.

#### **Technical Assistance Programs**

Technical assistance refers to the provision of services focused on increasing community understanding of the science, regulations and policy related to environmental issues and EPA actions. To support healthy communities and strengthen environmental protection, EPA works closely with communities to make sure they have the technical help they need.

*Technical Assistance Needs Assessment (TANA) Tool*

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-needs-assessments-tanas>

This process identifies additional support that a community may require in order to understand technical information and participate meaningfully in the Superfund decision-making process. A TANA helps EPA determine what technical assistance resources and information the Agency can provide to meet community needs.

*Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) Program*

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-services-communities-tasc-program>

This program provides services through a national EPA contract. Under the contract, a contractor provides scientists, engineers and other professionals to review and explain information to communities. TASC services are determined on a project-specific basis and provided at no cost to communities.

*Partners in Technical Assistance Program (PTAP)*

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/partners-technical-assistance-program-ptap>

Colleges and universities provide voluntary technical assistance to communities through this program.

*Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program*

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-grant-tag-program>

TAGs are awarded to non-profit incorporated community groups. With TAG funding, community groups can contract with independent technical advisors to interpret and help the community understand technical information about their site. The TAG recipient group is responsible for managing their grant funds and contributing a 20 percent award match. Most groups meet this requirement through in-kind contributions such as volunteer hours toward grant-related activities.

Environmental Justice Resources: *Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.* <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>

*EPA Region 8 programs collaborate closely to make sure underserved, low income and tribal communities facing disproportionate environmental risks have opportunities for meaningful participation in environmental decision-making. Region 8 also coordinates closely with EPA headquarters and states to support initiatives that provide all people living near Superfund sites with technical assistance, training opportunities and other services.*

*EPA has finalized the EJ 2020 Action Agenda (EJ2020) that is an updated strategic plan for environmental justice. This plan will help guide the EPA over the next several years to integrate environmental justice into EPA programs and activities and guide us in how to work with stakeholders to promote environmental justice beyond EPA specific programs. EPA has a variety of resources to support environmental justice:*

*Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving (CPS) Cooperative Agreement Program*

<https://www.epa.gov/environmental-justice/environmental-justice-collaborative-problem-solving-cooperative-agreement-0>

The CPS program provides funding for eligible applicants for projects that address local environmental and public health issues within an affected community. The program assists recipients in building collaborative partnerships to help them understand and address environmental and public health concerns in their communities.

*Environmental Justice Small Grants Program*

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-small-grants-program>

EPA's Environmental Justice Small Grants Program supports and empowers communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues. The program is designed to help communities understand and address exposure to multiple environmental harms and risks.

*Other Environmental Justice-Related Funding Opportunities*

<https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-grants-funding-and-technical-assistance>

## **Section 5: The Superfund Process**

Insert graphic here.

## **Appendix A: Contacts**

### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

#### **Robert Moler**

Community Involvement Coordinator  
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### Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation

#### **Michael Durglo, Jr.**

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### Blackfeet Nation

#### **Contact TBD**

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### Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)

#### **Lisa Dewitt**

Superfund Project Manager  
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Montana Department of Health & Public Services

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Flathead County

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Chairman, Flathead County Commission

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Other Agencies / Departments / Organizations

**Contacts TBD**



**Appendix B: Fact Sheets**

**Appendix C: Community Involvement Plan Questionnaire**

**Appendix D: Community Involvement Requirements in the Superfund Process**

**Other Appendices TBD**